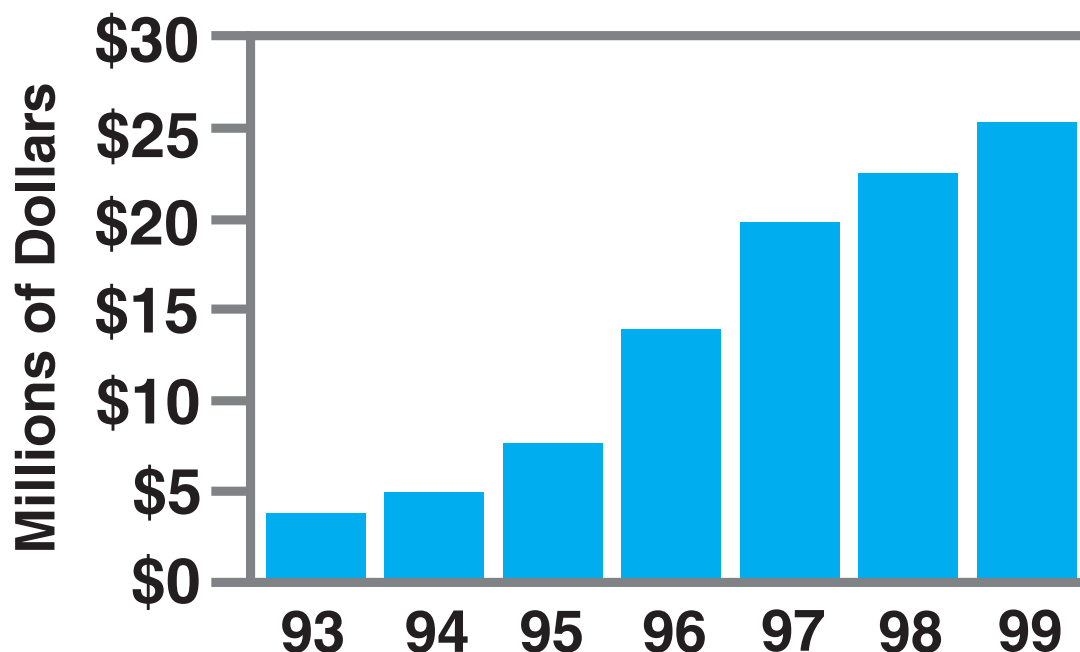


# Status of the program

For the past few years Metro Transit has studied how it can provide transportation services most efficiently for people with disabilities and senior citizens in King County. Rising costs and increased demand for services have required Metro to rethink what paratransit services it can provide, and to whom.

## Cost of Paratransit Service 1993-1999



■ 1996 King County created a Special Transportation Task Force to help Metro shape transportation services policies. Metro held extensive public outreach meetings in 1997 and

1998. The task force used the results to develop recommendations.

At the end of the public process, King County Executive Ron Sims recommended changes to some parts of the paratransit program. The King County Council approved those changes in spring 1999.

Now Metro is implementing those changes, which stress providing the most appropriate level of service to riders. Metro must make sure that people who can use regular bus service choose the bus instead of more expensive paratransit service. It costs nearly ten times as much to provide paratransit service as regular bus service.

These changes may affect you. In this newsletter, Metro wants to help you understand why these changes are taking place and what your options are.

<b>PARATRANSIT SERVICE (1999)</b>	<b>REGULAR BUS SERVICE (1999)</b>
<b>44,159 registered riders (12,264 active riders in 1999)</b>	<b>Estimated 3,000,000 riders</b>
<b>1 million rides</b>	<b>90 million rides</b>
<b>Average cost per trip: \$25.67</b>	<b>Average cost per trip: \$2.93</b>
<b>Carries 1.64 riders per van per hour</b>	<b>Carries 31.7 riders per bus per hour</b>

# COME TO A MEETING

Metro Transit will hold meetings in May 2000 to discuss changes in its ADA and community paratransit program, including trip-by-trip qualification and Options program changes.

## **Redmond Senior Center**

8703 160th Ave. N.E., Redmond

10:30 a.m.–12 noon, Monday, May 15, 2000

(Take Metro routes 263, 230, or 253, 291, 929, 249 or 251.)

## **Kent Regional Library**

212 Second Ave. N., Kent

6:30 p.m.–8:00 p.m., Monday, May 15, 2000

(Take Metro route 150.)

## **Plymouth Congregational Church**

1217 6th Ave., Seattle

10:30 a.m.–12 noon, Wednesday, May 17, 2000

(Take any downtown Metro route.)

## **Shoreline Community Center**

18560 1st Ave. N.E.

6:30 p.m.–8:30 p.m., Thursday, May 18, 2000

(Take Metro route 317.)

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If you have questions about the meetings, need a sign language interpreter or want to request meeting materials in braille, please contact Accessible Services immediately at (206) 689-3113 (voice), (206) 689-3116 (TTY) or [accessible.services@metrokc.gov](mailto:accessible.services@metrokc.gov) (e-mail).

# Higher Costs, Demand Require Program Changes

You probably know Metro Transit provides different kinds of paratransit service. The Americans with Disabilities Act, or ADA, requires only one kind of service. Metro Transit has defined ADA-required service separately from the other paratransit services it has traditionally provided, primarily to be sure it is complying with ADA legislation.

The ADA does not require those other paratransit services, sometimes referred to as “community” paratransit services. In the past the King County Council recommended retaining community transportation services in response to requests by paratransit riders for service in addition to ADA-required service.

Over the years, *ACCESS* Transportation provided these services along with ADA-required service. But resources for providing transportation beyond ADA requirements are diminishing, while demand is rising. Metro’s Accessible

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Services is studying ways to operate more cost-efficiently to preserve some community paratransit services, recognizing that some services must be reduced or eliminated. (ADA-required paratransit services, however, *cannot* and *will not* be reduced or eliminated.)

Implementing these changes will take time. *ACCESS* Transportation will prepare detailed information for you that clearly outlines how these changes may affect you and your choices. These changes will be explained in upcoming issues of ***ACCESS News*** before they are implemented. Metro Transit will also hold public meetings to answer your questions.

These changes are necessary steps as more people want services and the program faces more funding limitations. Metro Transit will keep you informed of what these changes may mean for you.

**ADA-required service** is curb-to-curb service, ordered the day before the ride that starts and ends within three-quarters of a mile of regular fixed-route bus service. This service must be available on the same days and hours, and in the same areas, that regular bus service is available. This service is required by ADA.

**Community paratransit services** include a variety of other paratransit services, including door-to-door, hand-to-hand assistance, advance trip reservation and standing ride/subscription service. These services are *not* required by ADA.

# Changes for Options Riders

Starting later this year, *ACCESS* Transportation van service for Options-only registered riders will be limited to those who live **more than three blocks** from the nearest fixed-route bus stop.

If you live **within three blocks** of a fixed-route bus stop and are an Options-only rider (that is, you have not been determined eligible for other ADA paratransit services), *ACCESS* Transportation rides will not be available to you beginning later this year.

You will be contacted in the next few months about your status if you used Options services during 1999. If you think you are eligible for ADA paratransit services, you will be encouraged to apply for the ADA program. The application process may involve an in-person evaluation of your physical abilities or cognitive skills (or both) to ride the regular bus. King County will provide transportation to and from the evaluation site at no cost to you. If you decide to apply for regular ADA paratransit service eligibility, you can continue to use *ACCESS* Transportation van service from your home as usual while your ADA status is determined. And in all cases you can still purchase and use taxi scrip.

This change – limiting nearly all Options riders to the purchase of taxi scrip – will take place later this year. Until you are

Continued on next page

contacted about your status, you may continue to use *ACCESS* Transportation van service.

Changes in Options van service will take place gradually. Accessible Services will contact each Options rider and review his or her situation with them, beginning with riders who took the most trips last year. Following this review, each rider will be notified of the results and the effective date of any changes.

Accessible Services staff will help you understand any changes in your service. If you are an Options rider and prefer not to pursue ADA eligibility, or if you are found not to be ADA eligible, Rider Information staff can work with you.



Rider Information staff can work with you to determine which fixed-route buses might meet your needs. You can call Rider Information at (206) 553-3000 or (206) 684-1739 (TTY).

# The Right Service for Your Trip

The diagram shows a rectangular card for 'Regional ADA Paratransit'. On the left side, there is a logo for 'METRO Seattle, WA' and 'ACCESS Transportation'. The main title 'Regional ADA Paratransit' is at the top center. Below the title, there are three fields: 'Code:', 'PCA:', and 'Expires:'. At the bottom, there is a blue bar with the 'King County METRO' logo and the text 'ID No.' followed by a line for a number. Two arrows originate from the right side of the page: one points to the 'Code:' field, and the other points to the 'ID No.' field.

## Code (1, 2 or 3):

This number refers to the federal ADA regulation under which you are eligible for paratransit service.

**ID No.:** \_\_\_\_\_

This is your personal registration number. It begins with a one- or two-letter code that indicates the program for which you are registered.




- **A** means you are **eligible** for ADA paratransit services and qualify for all trips you request on *ACCESS* Transportation.
- **C** means you are **conditionally eligible** for ADA paratransit services and qualify for only some trips you request on *ACCESS* Transportation.
- **R** means you are **eligible** for the Options program and qualify for *ACCESS* Transportation weekdays in the region where you live. This issue contains information about changes coming soon to the Options program.

Continued on next page



**PCA (Personal Care Attendant):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Y** means you require a personal care attendant and are authorized to have a personal care attendant with you on *ACCESS* Transportation trips at no additional fare. **N** means you do not require a personal care attendant.

 	<b>Regional ADA Paratransit</b>	
	<b>Code:</b>	<b>PCA:</b>
	<b>Expires:</b>	
 <b>ID No.</b> _____		

**Expires:** \_\_\_\_\_

A date here means your eligibility is temporary and will end on this date. You must reapply to receive paratransit service beyond this date. **NA** means your eligibility is not temporary, although Metro may periodically ask you to verify that the conditions that prevent you from riding the bus, some or all of the time, are still present.

Are you registered for ADA paratransit or Options services but haven't used any services lately? Over the next few months, people who are registered for ADA paratransit or Option services but who did not ride during 1999 will receive a letter from Accessible Services. The letter will ask if you are still interested in using these services and to respond by a certain date. To remain in the program, be sure you answer all questions in the letter and return it by the date specified.

## **ADA eligibility**

Paratransit transportation service is expensive to provide. To help control costs, in 1993 Accessible Services established levels of eligibility for *ACCESS* Transportation services based on ADA regulations. These regulations limit ADA van service to people with physical or cognitive conditions that prevent them from using the regular bus some or all of the time.

### **Under federal ADA regulations, eligible riders may:**

- qualify for paratransit service for all trips
- qualify for some paratransit service instead of using regular bus service (conditional eligibility)
- not qualify for paratransit service because they can use the bus

Now Metro must take additional steps to decide which trips may be made on *ACCESS* Transportation and which trips should be taken on regular bus service.

## Conditional eligibility

Even if you are eligible for *ACCESS* Transportation services because you meet ADA regulations, you may be eligible for only some trips and your requests for transportation will be reviewed on a trip-by-trip basis. If the conditions that prevent you from riding the bus are present for the trip you want to take, your request can be processed. If the conditions are **not** present for the trip you are requesting, you will be denied *ACCESS* Transportation service. This is called “conditional eligibility.”

Metro’s paratransit service parallels its fixed-route service: both operate the same days and hours, and in the same areas. The trip-by-trip review process determines when paratransit service is appropriate for a given rider and trip and when regular bus service is appropriate.

For example, a rider may be unable to take a particular trip by regular bus when, because of his or her disability:

- uneven terrain prevents access to a bus stop
  - the person is unable to ride the bus during hours of darkness
  - the lift is needed and can’t be used at the stop the rider needs, or
  - extreme heat or cold threatens the individual’s health.
- At other times, though, that same rider may be able to take the trip by bus.

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## **Know your category of eligibility**

Your category of eligibility is indicated on your ADA paratransit identification card: (see card above). Even if you are able to use regular bus service for a given trip, paratransit service may still be appropriate at other times. For example, if your disability means physical barriers prevent you from accessing a particular bus stop, *ACCESS* Transportation may provide service to and from a transfer point for regular bus service.

Upcoming newsletters will have more information about conditional eligibility and ways Accessible Services can help you choose the right service for your trip.

## **Reminder:**

## **Pay Your Fare Share**

The fare for *ACCESS* Transportation rides is 50 cents each way for every trip. There are no free rides (except for personal care attendants). Exact change is required, or call Metro Pass Sales at (206) 624-7277 (voice) or (206) 684-2029 (TTY) about purchasing a pass. Thank you for paying your fare share!

# For more information

King County Metro's Accessible Services:

Phone: (206) 689-3113

TTY: (206) 689-3116

E-mail: [accessible.services@metrokc.gov](mailto:accessible.services@metrokc.gov)

Web site: [transit.metrokc.gov](http://transit.metrokc.gov)

Fax: (206) 263-3101

Mail: King County Metro  
Accessible Services, EXC-TR-1240  
821 Second Ave., Suite 10  
Seattle, WA 98104-1598

If your mailing address has changed from what is printed on the label, please contact the Accessible Services Office.

**All ACCESS Transportation printed materials (including this newsletter) are available in braille, on audio tape cassette, in large print and on computer diskette. Call (206) 689-3113 (voice) or (206) 689-3116 (TTY).**

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